
Ananias & Sapphira

How To Live A Great Life During Bad Times

A really bad story that came at a really bad time:

Acts 5:1-11

First, a couple of ground rules:

Our God is a **JEALOUS** God...and that is a **GREAT THING**.

The Bible talks a lot about **MONEY** because God wants our **HEART**, not our **WALLET**.

This was an issue of **HYPOCRISY** and **LYING**, not **FINANCES**.

Four ways to look at our lives & possessions:

OWNER: "It is mine to do with **AS I PLEASE**."

BORROWER: "I'll bring it back in the same condition **I GOT IT**."

RENTER: "I will do **MY PART** and you do **YOUR PART**."

MANAGER: "I'm expected to **TAKE CARE OF** your things, and make them **EVEN BETTER**."



Life Group Study Questions

For the week of April 5, 2020

Welcome to the Spring Quarter of Life Groups!

This week we kick off our very first ONLINE Spring Life Group Quarter. These first few weeks are going to take some getting used to, but don't worry. We're already getting reports from groups who have been testing it for a few weeks, who started out as beginners and are now operating like veterans! To help you get started and have everyone on the same page, read through "Pro Tips" below on how to have a great online experience.

Make sure you take some time to also work through the Life Group questions for this week, and have a great first meeting!

HOW TO GET ONLINE WITH YOUR GROUP:

Your leader or host will be emailing you a link with the platform your group will be using to get online.

ONLINE GROUP "PRO TIPS"

[WATCH THIS VIDEO](http://lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/pro-tips/) at lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/pro-tips/

#1 Practice logging in & choose the best device option — The device you choose makes a difference. A COMPUTER is better than a TABLET, and a TABLET is better than a SMART PHONE, but they all work. On Zoom there is even a call-in option.

#2 Patience is key this is a new process for all of us — It may take a few meetings for it to run smoothly, but hang in there because connecting with your Life Group online is better than social isolation.

#3 Print and answer your Life Group questions & sermon notes — Having your notes by your side helps you focus on the people in the video screen, and make the most of your time together studying God's Word.

#4 Prioritize your time together — Know online meetings may be slightly shorter than in-person meetings. That's okay. Also, be ready to focus and make your time together a priority. With no travel, you are already saving time. We're guessing your meetings will be about 60-90 minutes. Be flexible as your group figures it out.

#5 Participate while reducing distractions — A great Life Group meeting allows everyone to participate and keeps God's Word at the center. Be aware each person needs to participate, so we need to allow everyone time to talk. Online groups have different distractions than a normal group. Distractions will happen so give yourself and your group grace as you navigate together. Some examples of distractions: pets, kids, eating, the background behind you, what you wear, driving or walking, etc. Please do all you can to minimize distractions.

***Be Smart About Security Online** - Whenever possible put a password on your meeting and any other recommendations the platform you're using suggests. Here are some of the recommendations if you're using Zoom: zoom.us/security.

GETTING STARTED ONLINE / CHECKING IN

Getting Online – If it's your group's first time together online, know this will be clunky to start. It's like this for everyone in the beginning. Be patient with one another.

Welcome to the Group – If this is your first time in your group, your group will spend some time welcoming you and getting to know you. The group members will share how long they've been at North Coast, a favorite hobby, and how long they've been in the group.

How's Your Quarantine Experience Going? We're all living life quite differently in the midst of this quarantine for COVID-19. Here's a few easy questions to let your group know how it's going.

- **Food & Meals** - What's your favorite food to eat during the shelter-in-place? Is that a new favorite? Any favorite foods that once were, but no longer are? Are your meals at the same time, earlier or later? Are there any local restaurants you are trying to support through take-out?
- **TV vs Reading vs Games vs Project at Home** – Some of us have more time, while others of us actually have less. As you look at the categories above, list whether it is the same, increasing, or decreasing and which one is helping you with your sanity?
- **Best Spot to Be** – We're all confined much more than normal. What are your top three places to be in your home (or on your property) during this time, and why?
- **Thoughts of God** – What have your thoughts about God been in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic? The same, different? Explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

QUICK REVIEW: Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

1. This weekend we heard how important it is that the manager asks questions and understands who the owner is, what he wants, and what he offers. How do these passages affirm what we need to know about God, our owner, in the midst of all that is going on during this time?

Isaiah 40:10-31 *New International Version (NIV)* - ¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. ¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? ¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. ¹⁶ Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. ¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. ¹⁸ With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? ¹⁹ As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A person too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot; they look for a skilled worker to set up an idol that will not topple. ²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the

earth was founded? ²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵ "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷ Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

2 Peter 1:3-10 *New International Version (NIV)* - ³ His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble,

Looking back at what you just wrote, which verse, statement or promise is most important for you to remember at this time?

2. Chris shared how the problem with Ananias and Sapphira wasn't with how they handled their money but their desire for "image management." They wanted others to think they were spiritual without making the complete sacrifice. How could the following passages help us avoid hypocrisy or not get trapped in "image management"?

Genesis 1:26-27 *New International Version (NIV)* - ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Galatians 6:3-10 *New International Version (NIV)* - ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Psalms 139:23-24 *New International Version (NIV)* - ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Which of these verses is most helpful for you in dealing with the temptation to engage in "image management"?

LOOKING AHEAD & PRAYER

Every quarter a group meets, it's interesting to see how God works as you connect, care for one another, and encourage each other to follow God and live out His Word. The same will be true as you meet together online. What are you looking forward to in your Life Group this quarter?

We don't know how long the quarantine and COVID-19 crisis will last. However, we do know our God is good, He hears our prayers and He wants to walk with us no matter what we encounter. What are your biggest needs over the next couple weeks? Job, health, relational, spiritual, other?

Are there any roles in your life needing to change from owner, renter, or borrower to manager?

RESOURCES DURING QUARANTINE: Check out these links, also available on our homepage: northcoastchurch.com.

- Need some extra help or are you looking to serve in the midst of this crisis? Visit the [COVID-19 Resources](#) page for a variety of options.
- Also, check out our [Daily Dose](#) series from this past week to help encourage you while dealing with the potential health, financial, and relational challenges COVID-19 may cause.



LIFE GROUP COVENANT

Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments during social isolation.

LIFE GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE – Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY – Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT – Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as: *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

SERVE – Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom. To find ways you can serve while remaining at a distance, visit northcoastchurch.com/covid-19-resources/

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).
2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7).
3. Take care of one another (John 13:34).
4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
5. Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).